

## Discovering the regenerative transformation of a city. Walter Benjamin as an inspiration for the Eco-flâneur.

In this presentation the relevance of Walter Benjamin and the flâneur for a critical reflection on sustainability for higher education in management is highlighted. Walter Benjamin developed the idea of the flâneur in 'Charles Baudelaire: A lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism. He used the powerful figure of the flâneur, a familiar character in the nineteenth century to analyze modernity. The concept of the flâneur is taken further to eco-flâneur, i.e., strollers as students and teachers who see what is happening and changing in the city and how street life is being transformed towards sustainability. The eco-flâneur is suggested as an alternative pedagogy to unite soul, eye and hand, three elements that are brought into connection by Walter Benjamin and that are vital for a sustainability mindset.

The concept of the eco-flâneur is used as a metaphor to rethink transformative education. A flâneur was the aristocrat, detached, the gourmet of the street, while the badaud was more associated with the working people, emotional, the gourmand (Shaya, 2004). Education should integrate both: the detached observer looking for knowledge and the one who is touched by what he observes. But there is more than image. Students can also be stimulated to become an eco-flâneur, i.e., one where hands, hearts and head are united (Ivanaj et al., 2014). Inspired by Paul Shrivastava's (2010) article 'Pedagogy of Passion for Sustainability' we will elaborate on how to combine sustainable management with physical exercises. It also fits in the growing attention for slow experiences, like slow food, slow fashion, and in the importance of walking to urban sustainability with respect to health (Herrmann-Lunecke, et al., 2020). We will use the Sustainable Entrepreneurial Promenade as an alternative pedagogy to illustrate another way of discovering the regenerative transformation of a city while relying on different models of social entrepreneurship (Alter, 2003; Klomp and Oosterwaal, 2021). This is not just a promenade, but a discovery of what is going on in a city (Mahmoud et al., 2022). The audience will be given the possibility to experience it by themselves, i.e. to discover the regenerative aspects of Hasselt and to allow space for reflection about the effectiveness of the method to see a city with different eyes and to be open for sustainable innovative initiatives.

The proposal fits in the topic 'Co-creative and transformative learning environments' and will be dealt with as an action atelier.

The aim of the workshop is to experience the role of an eco-flâneur in the city. Strolling is suggested as an alternative pedagogy. Participants will act as an eco-flâneur, detecting the sustainable innovative initiatives in the city. Participants will learn from the bottom-up; instead of looking for illustrations of the theory, the city is an open field ready to discover and to detect what is new.

The main didactic approach of the workshop is a stroll in the city. Depending on the number of participants, the city will be divided in parts and each participant has to walk like an eco-flâneur in this particular part, discovering/observing sustainable innovative initiatives.

The workshop will proceed as follows. First, a very brief introduction about the eco-flâneur will be given (20 minutes), then the participants start to walk in the district they have received (40 minutes) and will end with a debriefing about what the participants experienced (30 minutes). The workshop has potential for transformation because when applied in an education context students will learn from a city and will perceive in a different way whether and how cities are ready for a sustainable transformation. The exercise will ask the participants to open their eyes, i.e., to wonder by wandering.

### References:

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